

April 14, 2003

FORESTRY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

Tennessee has experienced one of its most active years in the Forestry Incentives Program (FIP). NRCS Tennessee received and approved 46 applications for cost-share assistance in establishing and/or releasing pine tree stands. Over 3,000 acres were planned for treatment obligating nearly \$240,000 of cost-share monies. Half of the funding was earmarked for a new tree planting practice designed to be more resistant to southern pine beetle attack. The practice utilizes a wider spacing, allowing the trees to meet merchantable size before losing vigor and becoming susceptible to pine beetle attack. This wider spacing also enhances wildlife habitat by providing more abundant herbaceous ground cover and lengthening the years before the habitat declines.

FIP was not reauthorized in the 2002 Farm Bill. Once the current funding is exhausted, no additional cost-share applications will be accepted. The Forestry Title of the 2002 Farm Bill authorizes a new program entitled Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP). This new program is funded through the U.S. Forest Service, and will be delivered in Tennessee through the Tennessee Division of Forestry.